

TPEA PROJECT: MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE GULF OF CADIZ

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Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) is coming to prominence as a new approach to the governance of the seas and oceans. It is taking on international importance as maritime nations exert greater control over their territorial waters and, in many cases, over much more extensive exclusive economic zones (Jay, 2010; Schaefer & Barale, 2011). This is in the interests of reversing the environmental degradation of the seas and facilitating the sustainable use of marine resources, both for traditional uses, such as fishing and navigation, and newer uses, such as renewable energy and mariculture (Douvere, 2008). MSP is being encouraged worldwide by inter-governmental bodies, NGOs, stakeholder organisations and marine scientists and managers (Agardy, 2010; De Santo, 2011; HELCOM & OSPAR, 2003), and a growing number of nations are drawing up spatial plans to regulate the use of their marine territories, in a way analogous to land-use planning.

In encouraging cross-border cooperation, regard must therefore be had to the different national frameworks that are developing, and means of finding agreed solutions to cross-border issues must be developed. MSP in a transboundary context must therefore be not just a technical exercise of allocating marine space efficiently to different uses, but also a deliberative process of understanding the various approaches at work, engaging with the concerns of the governmental and stakeholder bodies involved, and of facilitating institutional dialogue across borders. This is the importance of cross-border cooperation to ensure consistency of plans across marine political boundaries, administrative and natural as well the need to avoid conflict and create transboundary synergies.

In this context, the Transboundary Planning in the European Atlantic (TPEA) project is developed as response to the European Commission (DG Mare's) call for a *Project on Maritime Spatial Planning in the Atlantic, including Celtic Sea and Bay of Biscay*, in order to reflect the aim of the project, which is to deliver a commonly-agreed approach to cross-border MSP in the European Atlantic region. This approach will be trialled in two distinct geographical and political contexts, linked by their shared regional identity, and will provide detailed recommendations and guidelines for the evaluation of cross-border MSP. This project seeks to embrace the diversity of realities across the region, and develop the implementation of transboundary MSP in two distinct, but related contexts: a southern focus (Portugal-Spain), where MSP experience is already gaining ground and a consensus is emerging for cross-border solutions; and a northern focus (Ireland-UK) where more policy-centred traditions of planning are pointing in the direction of broader, and less prescriptive, MSP outcomes. By capturing this range of approaches, the project will articulate the potential for transboundary MSP within the European Atlantic as a whole and demonstrate options for cross-border initiatives elsewhere. Moreover, in recognising the varying stages of implementation of MSP within the region, the project respects the autonomy of member states in conducting MSP for national waters and the non-binding nature of planning outcomes resulting from the project. In the southern

context the Gulf of Cadiz is the proposed and analyzed pilot area, from the environmental, economic and social axis, taking into account the geographical characteristics, human pressures, priorities policies and traditions planning uses.

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